

WILL SOCIETY'S FROWN MAR MRS. R. W. GOELET'S ROMANCE AS IN CASES OF KATHERINE ELKINS AND DOROTHY DEACON?

'ORIENTAL BEAUTY' IS REPORTED FRETTING AT SOCIAL BARRIERS

Gossips Declare Mother-in-Law Goelet Will Cause Son's Wife to Join Katherine Elkins and Dorothy Deacon in Her Losing Fight to Force Recognition of Ultra Set—Katherine Elkins Has Just Divorced Billy Hitt and New York Wonders if Present Romance Will Be Similar.

NEW YORK, Feb. 4.

HOWEVER those outside its fringe may scoff at the artificiality of society, that exclusive group, on either continent takes itself and its formulae of position with extreme seriousness.

That one may come to the very rim of the select circle, but not be able to penetrate that line, however powerful the influence assisting, has been made strikingly evident in two sensational matrimonial disruptions in the past week, and rumors that a third is impending.

In each instance unhappiness has been derived largely from the fact that the barrier of society has been adamantly immovable as the Rock of Gibraltar. Each of the women has striven with force of personality and power of wealth to pierce the rim and each has been flung back with bruised ambition, sore heart and angered determination to drop the futile ambition to attain an unattainable goal.

PRINCESS' FLIGHT.

A spectacular instance of society's antagonism is seen in the plight of the Princess Radziwill, the former Dorothy Deacon, of Boston. She has induced the Vatican to grant an annulment of her marriage on the grounds she was forced into the match by her ambitious mother.

It is no secret that this match was demanded by the mother, whose career had banned her from social standing, and who for years pushed an intensive campaign for reinstatement in society. Her goal seemed to have been achieved when she impelled her daughter to marry a title. But she reckoned without the potency of society's frowns, for her titled daughter never was recognized by her husband's kin as of equal standing with him.

There is another unique angle to this case in that the Princess is the sister of Gladys Deacon, who became the Duchess of Marlborough when the Duke of Marlborough was divorced by the former Consuelo Vanderbilt. Twice the Deacon family has garnered titles. Once the quest proved fatal to happiness. Whether the match with the English title will continue to be happy is a subject of society speculation that has thus far found no negative answer.

KATHERINE ELKINS' CASE.

Another instance of court society's scowls and refusals to entold those not born to the purple is brought to mind in the unfortunate outcome of the marriage of Katherine Elkins, West Virginia belle, and William F. ("Billy") Hitt, of Washington, D. C. She has just obtained a divorce in Paris because of their incompatibility.

Those who know the couple trace their unhappiness back to Miss Elkins' ill-fated romance with the Duc d'Abruzzi, who was barred from marrying her by the stern opposition of the royal family of Italy. He was warned that if he took the girl as his wife she would get no social recognition at the Italian court.

Rather than go through life as a wife without a wife's full rights she spurned the title and married the American. But that romance has now proved to have been a vain quest for happiness.

They say that events of a kind happen in threes. Katherine Elkins has divorced "Billy" Hitt. The Princess Radziwill has obtained an annulment. And now the gossips in society aver that Mother Ogden Goelet shortly will witness the separation of her son, Robert Wilson Goelet, and the wife whose entrance into society she has helped to prevent.

WIFE DENIES BREAK.

Both Goelet and the former Fernanda Rocchi Rjabouchinsky, the dancer whose "Oriental beauty" created a sensation when she arrived here a few years ago, have denied there is any rift in their relations.

She has within a few days pointed out that they are about to sail for Europe with their baby on a pleasure trip. They insist they are living together in utmost content.

THE futility of fighting society for admittance to the exclusive set when society "turns thumbs down" has been exemplified in the romances of these three women, Katherine Elkins, daughter of a Senator; Dorothy Deacon, who became Princess Radziwill, and the second Mrs. Robert W. Goelet, who, it is said, has found too hard the task of breaking into society against Mother Goelet's scorn. Katherine Elkins has divorced "Billy" Hitt; Princess Radziwill has obtained an annulment, and it is rumored the Goelet's will part.

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Italian court. Instantly there arose the problem of what his wife's status would be.

Opposition to the marriage became united in the royal family. Miss Elkins might become a duchess, but could assume no official standing in the court.

In vain the duke pleaded. He found his appeals futile and came to America to consult with the Senator.

He suggested that perhaps Miss Elkins would be satisfied with a title that held no official standing for her.

"Is that so?" cried the Senator. "If my daughter becomes the Duchess of Abruzzi she will be the duchess in every sense of the word. I don't object to a money settlement, if that is required. But I want my daughter to be the wife of the man she marries and to have the same rights as she would in this country. Do you catch my meaning?"

The duke caught his meaning. Retorted the Senator:

"Well, see what you can do."

The distracted suitor returned to Rome and renewed his pleadings. They continued in vain. The court was inexorable. Post haste he sped back to West Virginia. His sincerity impressed Senator Elkins.

But the statesman shook his head determinedly and said:

"It's no use. If you love my daughter why don't you give up the Italian court? Why don't you marry here where we don't bother about royalty? Live here as an American. I will give you all the money you need. I will put you in business. Neither you nor the girl will lack anything. That's a reasonable proposition. She loves you. You love her. I want to

make you both happy. Think it over."

The duke accepted the amazing problem for reflection. His heart grappled with his head. Love found his loyalty to the Italian court superior to the yearnings in his heart. So the engagement came to an abrupt end.

The sorrowing duke went into the polar regions to forget the woes of his romance. He went hunting. He went on cruises with the Italian navy. He climbed the Himalayas. He gave himself up to any and every pursuit that would make him forget.

And Senator Elkins, disappointed that his prospective son-in-law should have failed to show the bumpiness he hoped for and had been willing to spurn a girl that he might retain his social status, thereafter declared his daughter would marry none other than an American.

Senator Elkins, then in ill health, was further grieved by the unhappy outcome of his daughter's love for the duke. Of course, there was "Billy" Hitt, but everybody, probably even "Billy," knew that although she was fond of both her determined suitors, it was toward the Duc d'Abruzzi that the heiress' heart inclined.

BILLY WINS—AND LOSES.

The West Virginia belle went to Europe chaperoned by her mother. Hitt accompanied them. When the two women returned "Billy" was still with them.

For two years his persevering quest for the girl's hand and heart continued with increasing fervor and finally she surrendered to his suit. They were married in October, 1912.



Mrs. Katherine Elkins Hitt, who has just obtained a divorce.

But society guessed wrong. Their happiness was not prolonged. They had been compatible as friends and principals in a startling love game. They found each other incompatible as man and wife. It proved to be the case of a charming woman and a popular man who found that what they had interpreted to be love was really good friendship and nothing more.

Last spring Mrs. Hitt went to Paris. Her husband did not accompany her. It had become the fashion for those of wealth and position who sought divorces to steal off to France quietly and file suit. So it began to be whispered that the rift in the Hitt family had become an irreparable breach.

This time gossip proved correct. For it was announced in Washington that the Paris courts had granted Mrs. Hitt a divorce and

that her husband had not contested.

Now Mrs. Hitt and her mother are living in Washington. Hitt lives not many blocks away. Both are prominent figures in the social functions of the National Capital. They mingle in the same circles. They have much in common. But the one thing requisite to happiness they have found they do not possess in common—compatibility.

She finds her recreation in horse shows and in feats of horsemanship, for which she was for many years noted. She participates in the Capital's most brilliant events. Wealth and standing are at her command. But her life, perhaps, has held less happiness for her than the shop girl or factory lassie who seeks no social recognition and is content with whatever lot in which marriage may place her.

TWICE LINKED IN SPELL.

Twice Katherine Elkins has been linked with thrilling romance. And twice she has found that her romances did not hold enduring love. The man she liked the better did not have the stamina to sacrifice standing for love. The man to whom she turned did not have the power to hold the heart he had won.

The plight of Dorothy Deacon has been of a different kind. She went to Rome last year in successful quest of an annulment. Announcement of the Vatican's decision was made recently. Her ground was that she was forced into the marriage by the ambitions of her mother.

Dorothy Deacon is the daughter of the late Edward Parker Deacon

sanitarium. He died there in 1901.

Mrs. Deacon, who had long since assumed the name of Mrs. Baldwin, again took Dorothy in tow. Years afterward the Prince and the girl met and a new courtship quickly developed.

The old scandal was revived as his ears by his family. His mother, the former Countess Branicka, a woman of determination, was obdurate when he proposed that he would marry the girl.

A WAR OF MOTHERS.

The two mothers were playing a keen game against each other. The mother of the prince had become a social leader in Rome's exotic society. She was looked upon as their sovereign by the expatriates in Italy. But Mrs. Baldwin was progressing socially. She was often with the Italian Prince Doria. It was in Rome that the Prince Radziwill and Dorothy Deacon met.

A very fitting match, mused the clever Mrs. Baldwin. An opportunity to revenge herself upon the old Princess Radziwill for her antagonistic attitude.

It must have been a strategically wonderful fight the girl's mother made, for she was opposed by the powerful hostility of the old princess and by her daughter's unwillingness. Yet her purposes triumphed. The young couple were married in 1910.

They were to have been united in a London church June 22. But when a somewhat distinguished crowd assembled, the principals did not appear. It was lamely explained that the proper documents had not been obtained. It is now thought that the prince's mother managed the delay. But they ultimately were married on July 5, in St. Mary's Church. Mrs. Baldwin was conspicuously triumphant in her demeanor. The bride was listless and cold.

A LOVELESS MARRIAGE.

"A loveless marriage," they whispered.

And a loveless marriage it has proved.

They are recalling incidents now to show that it could not have been a marriage of love. One such instance was noted in May, 1910, when Mrs. Baldwin and her reluctant daughter lived at the old castle of Caprarola in Rome.

The Prince called one day to see Miss Deacon. She refused to receive him.

Society was aghast. Here was a prince whose mother's fortune was reputed to be \$20,000,000. And there was an American girl whose family tree was marred by a scandal that society had not forgotten and which society refused to forgive. Her wealth proved of little consequence. But her spurning of the Prince at that time gained her admiration for her determination.

The titled suitor's case was further embarrassing because his mother had threatened to cut him off without a penny if he married the Boston girl. He was dependent on the allowance from the aged Princess.

As matters turned out he inherited most of her estate.

Miss Deacon's personality in time overcame the drawback of the family scandal, and by degrees she was taken in tow by members of another high social group than the one to which the Princess Radziwill belonged. This group was headed by the Princess San Faustino.

DEEMED HER INFERIOR.

But the Princess Radziwill, to the time of her death two years after her son's marriage, adamantly declined to accept her American daughter-in-law as a social equal. The prince himself, after the marriage, informed his wife that she could not expect to have the same position as he himself.

Quite naturally, this attitude added fuel to the flame of her indignation.

Whether the Robert W. Goelet will join the parted couples of society is a subject of speculation. They have denied the possibility. But there have been rumors that Mrs. Goelet will sue for separation. If that happens it will be a triumph for Mrs. Ogden Goelet, who strenuously opposed the marriage that brought the woman known as "The Princess" into the family.

HIS WIFE "OSTRACIZED."

She is the former Fernanda Rocchi Rjabouchinsky, second wife of Robert W. Goelet. His first was the very pretty Elsie Whelan, of Philadelphia, who obtained a divorce and became the wife of Henry Clews, Jr.

In 1915 the passenger list of a ship arriving here bore the names of "Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Rjabouchinsky." She was a dashing young woman. He was believed to be a purchasing agent for Russia. He said his art collection was worth \$1,000,000. She was twenty-four and the daughter of Prof. Mariano Rocchi, of the University of Perugia, Italy. She

Claremont and the